

JOINT SPECIAL MEETING
NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

JULY 9, 2009
7:00 p.m.
HELEN NELSON ROOM

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Joseph Harpie
Commissioner Michael Gerhardt
Commissioner Dana Woods
Commissioner Greg Polk
Commissioner Thomas Shields
Commissioner Mark Pappa
Commissioner Val Ginn
Commissioner Jeff Hedberg

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman Joseph Harpie
Town Council Member Jay Bottalico
Town Council Member Michael Lenares
Mayor Jeff Wright
Commissioner Jeff Hedberg
Commissioner Thomas Shields
Town Council Member Chris Banach

Also present, Town Planner Ed Meehan

II. PRESENTATION OF MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Jim Fielding, LS and Ray Gradwell, PE BL Companies presented the draft construction plan for the municipal lot. The construction design is arranged in three sections:

- (1) Total reconstruction of the (5) five acre lot including the former Bonelli parcel;
- (2) reconstruction of the westerly half including “center green”, new subsurface drainage, underground electrical, new islands, dumpster relocation, sidewalks and landscaping, (3) reconstruction of easterly half repaving, new islands, new lighting and landscaping.

Mr. Fielding discussed changes that were made in certain construction materials to reduce project costs by value engineering. For example, substantial savings can be achieved by reducing the amount of granite curbing and substituting concrete curb. Other value engineering modifications include reducing the area of concrete sidewalks and landscape plantings.

Ray Gradwell talked about bidding options such as deduct alternates. The bid will be based on unit costs for each item. This will provide good flexibility when finalizing contact cost.

Based on the DRAFT bid construction plans BL Companies prepared Preliminary Opinions of Probable Cost for the following alternatives:

FULL BUILD OUT OF ENTIRE PARKING LOT:	\$1,229,855
FULL BUILD OUT OF WEST SIDE:	\$ 826,966
PARTIAL BUILD OUT WEST SIDE:	\$ 640,640
FULL BUILD OUT EAST SIDE:	\$ 499,669
PARTIAL BUILD OUT EAST SIDE:	\$ 287,553

Chairman Harpie reported that the Urban Action Grant budget has about \$600,000 for construction of the municipal lot improvements. This is based on the certificate of taking issued for the Bonelli property which Town Attorney Ancona successfully concluded on July 8th. The budget breakdown is as follows:

MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT BUDGET

BL Companied LLC contract	\$124,100
Appraisals (2) costs	3,400
Property acquisition	268,000
DECD – legal	5,000
Available for Construction	\$599,500
Total Grant Budget	\$1,000,000

III. DISCUSSION COSTS OPTIONS AND BIDDING STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL

Mr. Bottalico moved that the project go forward seeking bids for the “west side” full build option and the “east side” partial as a bid alternate. Mr. Pappa seconded this motion and discussion followed.

Discussion comments included the observation that recent bid opening for renovations of the former police department area came in very favorably. BL Companies representatives noted that streetscape bids in Rocky Hill came in under probable cost estimates although costs for bituminous pavements are still constant. The structure of the bid based on unit costs will afford the opportunity to work with a bidder to reduce costs.

Mr. Harpie reported that there could also be the possibility, depending on Town Council's decision, to request the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to reprogram the Phase III uncommitted budget of \$145,000.00 to the municipal parking lot project.

Town Planner Ed Meehan noted that the draft construction plan and bid manual must be submitted to DECD for their review including the probable construction cost estimates. The Town Council cannot authorize the award of a construction contract until the project engineers, BL Companies, qualifies the lowest three (3) bidders and recommends a contractor. At this point the Town must be assured that all project funding sources are firmly in place and sufficient to cover contracted cost.

Mr. Bottallico withdrew his motion as did the seconder, Mr. Pappa.

Mr. Lenares moved that the Economic Development Commission and Downtown Revitalization Committee jointly and unanimously recommend Town Council consider a project bidding strategy comprised of three (3) pricing components:

1. Request bids for the full build of the entire parking lot Options A&B, probably cost estimate \$1,229,855.
2. Requests bids for full build of west side Option A, probably cost estimate \$826,966.
3. Request bids for full build of east side Option B, probably cost estimate \$499,669.

Mr. Bottallico seconded this motion and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Polk moved that the Economic Development Commission and Downtown Revitalization Committee recommend that the Town Council request the Office of Policy and Management to reprogram the \$145,000, uncommitted balance of Phase III STEAP Main Street Improvement grant, to the Municipal Parking Lot Improvement project. Mr. Bottallico seconded this motion and it was approved with one abstention, Mr. C. Banach.

Mr. Harpie stated that these recommendations would be reported to the Town Council on July 14th at its regular monthly meeting. Mr. Harpie requested Mr. Meehan to send a memo to the Town Manager describing the joint recommendations. Mr. Meehan is also working on a brief "white paper" which will provide a summary of the project, explain its goals and benefits, property acquisition, parking count, infrastructure improvements and probable costs as provided by BL Companies.

IV.PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Bowen, 22 Woods Way, Town Councilor – Mr. Bowen expressed his thanks to the committee and commission for working on this project and offered the following observations:

The probable cost estimates are well above the available construction budget. \$600,000 may be possible for the west side full build but does not accomplish the project goals. He recommends reconsideration of bidding strategy with full build west side as base bid and partial build east side as an alternate.

Mr. Bowen expressed his opinion that the “center green” is a superfluous as a “park within a parking lot” and does not make sense because of its extraordinary maintenance costs. The focus of this project would be better served if it were directed on completion of a functional parking lot.

The use of reprogrammed STEAP grant \$145,000.00 is out of order for the Town Center master improvement plan. Market Square, as the fourth phase, should be done next, this would be more beneficial and a positive economic impact.

Mr. Bowen stated he is concerned that the final property costs of the Bonelli parcel are unknown and this could be appealed over the next year.

V. Mr. Harpie concluded the meeting thanking BL Companies for their work and reminded the commission and committee members of the Town Council July 14th meeting.

Mr. Polk moved that the meeting adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pappa and approved. The meeting concluded at 8:20 P.M

Respectfully submitted,

Edmund Meehan
Town Planner